

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GEORGE 00935 070144Z
ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4606
INFO AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN
AMEMBASSY KINGSTON
AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

CONFIDENTIAL GEORGETOWN 0935

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR, PFOR, US, GY
SUBJECT: GUYANA REQUEST TO TERMINATE AIR BASE AGREEMENT

REF: KREBS/HEAVENER LETTER 4/20/76; KREBS/LUERS LETTER
11/20/75

SUMMARY: THE GOG HAS INFORMALLY REQUESTED TERMINATION OF
THE US TIMEHRI (ATKINSON FIELD) AIR BASE AGREEMENT.
THE AGREEMENT IS ONE OF THE THINGS THAT THE OPPOSITON
FREQUENTLY CITES IN ITS CRITICISM OF THE GOG. I NOTE THAT
THE US CONSIDERED UNILATERAL TERMINATION OF THE AGREEMENT IN
LATE 1975 AND EARLY 1976, AND BELIEVE THAT THE REASONS CITED
IN REF CORRESPONDENCE FOR DOING SO ARE STILL VALID. END SUMMARY.

1. DURING OUR SECOND DISCUSSION ON THE NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE
VISIT AND THE ARRIVAL IN GUYANA OF THE DEFENSE ATTACHE PLANE
FROM CARACAS, FONMIN WILLS SAID BURHMAN HAD INSTRUCTED HIM TO
EXPLORE WITH THE US BURNHAM'S DESIRE TO TERMINATE THE
TIMEHRI (ATKINSON FIELD) BASE AGREEMENT. I ASKED IF HE WAS
REQUESTING THAT WE TERMINATE THE AGREEMENT AND HE REPLIED
AFFIRMATELY. I REPLIED THAT I DID NOT KNOW WHAT THE DEPARTMENT'S
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POSTITON WOULD BE.(I WAS FAMILIAR WITH THE EXCHANGES BETWEEN
AMBASSADOR KREBS AND LUERS AND HEAVENER IN 1975 AND
EARLY 1976 BUT DID NOT SO INDICATE TO WILLS.) WILLS
SAID THAT THE TREATY IS A SOURCE OF EMBARRASSMENT AND
IRRITATION TO BURNHAM AND HE HOPED VERY MUCH THAT THE
US WOULD RESPOND FAVORABLY.

2. THE EMBASSY HAS NOTICED THAT THE OPPOSITION PEOPLES PROGRESSIVE PARTY (PPP) NEWSPAPER "THE MIRROR" CONINTUES TO CRITICIZE THE GOVERNMENT CONCERNING THE BASE AGREEMENT.

3. I CONCUR WITH THE JUDGEMENTS EXPRESSED IN THE REFERENCED KREBS/LUERS/HEAVENER CORRESPONDENCE AND IN THE RECOMMENDATION CONTAINED IN THE DRAFT ROGERS/SISCO "CIRCULAR 175 PROCEDURE" MEMORANDUM (1-22-76). THE LATTER RECOMMENDED THAT THE EMBASSY BE AUTHORIZED TO INFORM THE GOG BY NOTE THAT THE US HAS REVIEWED ITS REQUIRMENTS AND HAS CONCLUDED THAT IT NO LONGER REQUIRES RIGHTS TO UTILIZE THE TIMEHRI AIRFIELD FACILITIES.

4. BY HANDLING THE MATTER IN THIS WAY WE AVOID A POSSIBLE UNILATERAL DENUNCIATION OF THE AGREEMENT BY THE GOG THE NEXT TIME SOME STRAIN ARISES IN US-GUYANA RELATIONS OR BURNHAM HAS NEED FOR SOME DRAMATIC ANNOUNCEMENT. BY SENDING A NOTE WITHOUT HAVING RECIEVED A FORMAL WRITTEN REQUEST WE AVOID THE APPEARANCE OF HAVING YIELDED UNDER PRESSURE. MOREOVER, WE WOULD THEREBY ELIMINATE ANOTHER SOURCE OF FRICTION IN THE US-GUYANA RELATIONSHIP. WE COULD EXPECT, OF COURSE, THAT BURNHAM WOULD AT SOME POINT PUBLICLY MAKE KNOWN THE TERMINATION OF THE AGREEMENT AND CLAIM POLITICAL CREDIT FOR THE ACTION.

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Message Attributes

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